

Week 20: Students write free with general prompts

Pearls and roses

By Kayla Wood
Dummerston Middle School, Grade 7

Two of the most valuable gifts I have ever gotten were a red rose and a pearl necklace. The red rose was recently given to me, but sadly it is starting to wilt, and the pearl necklace is hiding in the depths of my attic, but I will always remember that at one time, I was given these two precious items.

On Dec. 22, 2002 my great-grandmother, Hazel C. Hazelton, passed away. Long before then, I was given the beautiful pearl necklace. When I was younger I would go with another relative to her house to take care of her, and one day, she was feeling well enough to go to her old trunk and take out the old pearl necklace. I remember that she told me stories about it, but since I was young, I forgot them, thinking that they weren't all too important. As I think back now, if I could only just remember them, what great importance they would be to me. I remember her putting the necklace on me and telling me that I could keep it if I would take care of it. I took great care of it for about a year, wearing it about every day, and then I clearly remember putting it on my shelf with all my valuables, and then it disappeared along with many other of my things. To the attic they went, and when she died, I searched the whole house for it, but I couldn't find it in time for the funeral. I hope someday, when I am able to get back into the attic, I will find the beloved pearl necklace.

I don't think that she only gave me the pearl necklace; she also gave me something else; I'm not really sure what it is that she gave me, but after she died I felt different, like there was an extra part of me, a part with courage and more strength. My great-grandmother lived to be 102. I really want to live as long as or even longer than her. Sadly, I can't remember much more about her, but I have one picture and a poem that will always make me think of her.

On Nov. 9, 2007, my great-uncle, Robert Eugene Bolster, passed away. Tuesday, Nov. 13 was his funeral, and after Taps were played, everyone was allowed to take a rose from his grave. I took one. Before the funeral I was having a very hard time getting over his death, but taking the rose and being able to look at it and smell it every day helped me a lot. I still miss him, but that rose means a lot to me. I am glad we could take one. Even though the rose died, I have decided to take a box and keep it in that because it is something that, at the time, I really needed. "A bit of fragrance always clings to the hand that gives you roses" goes the Chinese proverb. This reminds me of my uncle, and the rose is something I will always cherish.

One thing that I miss about my uncle was how he would always ask me, "Do you know how many ribs you have?" The first time he asked, I didn't have a clue. "Well, if you don't know then I will count them for you." Immediately he started to "count" my ribs. He was tickling me, and so it always was, "Let me count your ribs." Which, of course, was always him tickling me until I finally could make my escape.

ALONE



Erica Caposseo, Essex High School

The Glover: Part 1

By Emily Kulig | Rutland High School, Grade 10

He sits in his shop all day long; plucking each hair off the skin of a goat, and returning them, properly, to an expensive looking shawl. His beard is scruffy, white, and he has minimal hair on his head. The clothes that he wears are never polished, never as fine as the materials he fixes — at least that's what I can see from outside.

Young men continuously pelt his window with rotten eggs and snowballs. Their hands are covered with a cheap, manufactured material, his own kind betraying him. As soon as they're gone, he picks up his glasses and heads outside to start wiping the streaks off; always clockwise.

I watch from my familiar bench on the idle street corner, reading the paper and drinking my black coffee.

I decide it's time for me to take a closer look in his small shop. Day after day, I peek in his window, but it is dark, and I see very little. After I am done with the paper, I throw it away as I make my way over. The cold whipping through my own trench coat, I grab hold of my hat to protect it from the wind.

When I open the door, a soft "ting" reaches my ears. I hear rustling in the back.

His shop is small, rectangular and overflowing with handmade clothes. All the way back, about 20 feet, is a rack of finely made coats of all types: raincoats, overcoats, suits, fur coats, vests, jackets, sweaters. I could barely make out what types of coats they were — there were so many hugging tightly together.

"I'll be right with you," calls the voice, still from the back. I continue looking. To my left are shelves sectioned off to show hats, mittens, gloves, socks and scarves.

I pick up a pair of gloves and instantly became entranced. The touch is like feeling something so soft it was hardly there. It is smooth and silky, but not so silky that it feels oily or fake or metallic. So soft, yet I sense it to be strong enough to do what gloves were meant to do.

It now felt thick and reflexive. With these gloves in my hands I feel as if I could handle any degree the wind would shriek at me.

"You like them?" The man startled me when he spoke. His voice is not so much in the salesperson tone as it is in a satisfied composure. He has a mountain-man, rugged-looking beard, and his eyes are the color of dark storm clouds on their way to cause a nasty rainstorm. He is a tad shorter than I am and when I look down at him, I can see that only a few white hairs stand directly on the top of his head. His hands folded to his

chest; I can see they are balanced and subtle. Both delicate and strong, almost knowing.

"Yeah," I reply. "They're something else."

He moves behind the counter, but when he spoke again it wasn't to try to sell me the angel's hands I held onto most dearly.

"I see you every morning on that bench. Reading the paper and sipping coffee. The oncoming cold does not bother you?" he says as he cocks his head.

"It didn't used to," I respond. "The coffee kept me warm."

He chuckles. "And when the coffee runs out?"

"Well, you can imagine what I'm doing here."

"Ah, yes," he says as if he suddenly realizes he is in his own shop of garments. He says nothing further.

"So how much are they?" I ask, reaching for my wallet.

"Sorry?" He puts his finger behind his ear.

"The gloves"— I hold them up — "how much are they?"

"For you?" He says, calculating the price. He cups his chin in his hand and gazes up at the ceiling. "For you?" he says again and looks straight at me. "Take them; they're free."

"No," I say getting some dollar bills. "Please, I couldn't. Here, please accept this." I offer my crisp bills toward him, but he holds up a firm hand.

"No. I saw your face when you picked up those gloves, saw the glimmer in your eyes. You truly understand the delicacy and deliverance of them. You have the touch; do not let anyone tell you otherwise. Hmm... cherished, caring, compassionate yet firm... You were meant to have them. I could never come between what is meant to be. Take them," he says again.

"But your business," I blurt out before I can stop myself.

"My business is not your concern," he says without a hint of anger in his voice.

Very few customers come into his shop. He produces more wares than he can sell. And the shop is not exactly in the center of town.

"Nor is it a concern to me." He gets off the high stool he had perched himself on and moves to a low chair, where his goat skin was halfway gone and he was working on the second of the two gloves. His hands never shake and are sensitive and critical in taking the hairs and moving them from one object to the other.

Halloween

By Nathan Tyler Barcomb
Brattleboro Area Middle School, Grade 7

Spooky ghosts and creepy creatures
Venomous spiders and warty goblins
Groaning zombies and scary ghouls
As I walk toward the door of the first house
Someone jumps out at me from behind the shadows

"BOO" they scream at me
As I fall over with a loud yelp
They run away laughing as I lay on the ground

All around me kids dressed as creepy critters
Dracula or Frankenstein, ghosts and witches
I approach the door once more and knock
A few seconds pass then a tall woman answers

She is dressed in a witch's costume
With a fake wart on her nose.
And a tall black hat.

I say the few famous words
That no one could ever forget,
"trick-or-treat"

I get one little piece of candy
But this one's special

It is my favorite flavor and it is the first of the night

As I drop the treat into my bag
Soon to be filled with lots more
I remember this ghoulish night is special
And I think about it
Halloween is the greatest holiday of them all

Real life

By Samantha Rose Newell
Brattleboro Union High School, Grade 10

Now that I think about it
Everything is real
From the things you do
To the things you feel

Everything you touch
All the tears you shed
All the fury in your heart
Is there until you're dead

So don't show your wrath
Don't show your fear
Don't bother with your enemies

Just the ones you hold near
Tears show your weakness
But don't conceal your pain
For bottling up feelings
Can drive someone insane

Ryan Sheckler

By Brianna Snow
Dummerston Middle School, Grade 8

One day in school I and a few friends in my class were in the book fair looking at a book. Out of the blue one of the guys in my class said, "I found this book on famous sport players." So we started looking through it and then we came across the BEST picture we could have found. It was a picture of a pro skateboarder. His name is Ryan Sheckler. Ryan is the hottest guy ever. He has two brothers, a mom and a dad. In his spare time he likes to hang out with his brothers and friends. He's now 18 years old. He has been skateboarding since he was 4 years old. He loves his family but it's hard for him with traveling and not being with them. When he can't be skateboarding he likes to be snowboarding. My friends and I aren't obsessed; we just think he's hot!

Free

By Hannah Reynolds
Dummerston Middle School, Grade 8

no bride
no reins
no saddle
nothing but me and you
trusting each other
cause if we don't, I will fall
I have to go with the motion
through the snow as fast as you please
like my rocking horse when I was little
only you are real
and you are mine
and we are free



YWP is a grassroots nonprofit that helps students write better and gain an audience for their best work. YWP offers writing prompts, special projects and a safe Web site, youngwritersproject.org, where students share their writing, comment on the news and each other's work, participate in group discussions and work on projects. YWP is indebted to the generosity of the Vermont Business Roundtable which is funding its core work for the second year.



On the Web

at
youngwritersproject.org

NEW 2008 Prompts. Check out the YWP's weekly prompts that are scheduled through the rest of this year. Go to the Web site, click on "Publish" in the top menu bar and follow the "Prompts" link.

High School Book Blog-In. If you're a high school student who likes books, go to YWP's Web site — youngwritersproject.org — to participate in forums on the 15 finalist books for the Green Mountain Book Award. Site contains book summaries, study guides and more. Find links on top of the front page of the site.

More writing on the Web.

Inner tempest

By Melissa Soule
Leland and Gray High School, Grade 9

It whirls within me
A self-willed beast, devouring my entrails
Yet I have no wish to stop the pain.
No. I am an indulging and incapable parent to a spoiled child, too fond of their sweets.
Instead of rebelling against this wild animal inside me, I urge it on.
I am the conductor of my own destruction.
I allow the decaying process to carry on.

The beast is merely an opponent to my mind in the blurred race to my wild thoughts.
The ultimate prize; a frozen sense of reality, faded grey and black at the seams.
All understanding, preparation and rational thought fly from my head like a bird, and nestle in my swollen chest, impregnating my lungs with something a thousand times heavier than the life-giving air they desire.

That same bird is trapped, beating weakly at the confining cage my ribs create, shifting my very heart with its fury.

As I sit, and shakily pick up my pencil, so carefully sharpened,
My clothes, so lovingly chosen for luck,
My hair, brushed gently back, and pinned up in my favorite style,
Brushed away from my face, that should be confident, but is instead a solemn mask,
far too pale, with lips red from nervous attention, and wide, staring eyes, their pupils pinpricks of fear.

And I sit silent as the test begins.
This one hour that so much depends on.
Yet I cannot move.

I am frozen, a living sculpture.
Immobile with the roiling mass within.
Smothered by my inner tempest.